

GRANDE RONDE RAPPELLERS

ABOUT THE CREW

The Grande Ronde Rappellers are a 38-person crew of highly trained aerially delivered wildland firefighters sponsored by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, based in La Grande, Oregon. The crew consists of 27 permanent and 11 temporary seasonal



positions. The mission profile of our crew is primarily initial attack via rappel or helitack. The crew also engages in large fire support, search and rescue and prescribed fire assignments. We share responsibility for initial attack on the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests with other local resources, however we are a National resource that has responded to fires throughout the country. Our unique method of delivery and rigorous training requires candidates to be in top physical shape.

FIRE TRAINING

Beginning in early May each year, rappeller rookie training is a five-week program designed to hone the skills and test the abilities of prospective rappellers. The curriculum is a mixture of classroom time and field-based work, including annual fire and saw refreshers, basic aviation and helicopter crew member indoctrination, and *copious* amounts of physical training.

Midway through the training cycle, rookies can expect to enjoy five days in the field for Mountain Week. This experience is tailored to simulate many of the physical and mental stresses of remote firefighting.

Finally, rookie training culminates with successful candidates being sent on to the National Rappel Academy in Salmon, Idaho.



RAPPEL TRAINING

The National Rappel Academy is a performance-based training program, demanding a high level of physical and mental toughness of candidates. Training begins in ground school, progresses to the rappel tower and aircraft simulators, and culminates with live rappels in typical mountain terrain. Typically lasting from a week to twelve days, this is a highly regimented and demanding program, with each progression in the training sequence building upon the last; as such, the highest level of proficiency is required in each portion of the training. Failure is not uncommon. Those who succeed become part of the small and tight-knit community of helicopter rappellers.

CONTACT

If you're interested in learning more about what it takes to become a member of our crew, please contact us at 541-975-5440.